

# Practical Problems Involving Decimals

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**Reporting Category** Computation and Estimation

**Topic** Solving practical problems involving decimals

## Materials

- Newspaper and/or magazine ads
- Shopping list
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Practical Problems Involving Decimals handout (attached)

## Vocabulary

*estimate, decimal* (earlier grades)

*budget* (6.7)

## Student/Teacher Actions (what students and teachers should be doing to facilitate learning)

Prior to the lesson, create a shopping list based on products appearing in newspaper and/or magazine ads. Save the ads for use during the lesson. It is important that each of the items on the shopping list be found in more than one ad so students will have to make shopping decisions.

1. Ask students to think about how decimals are used in real life. Have them share their responses, and write them on a chart. If no one mentions money, add it to the list. Lead a discussion about the importance of knowing how to budget money. Ask students to describe instances of their parents working on budgets. Encourage students to share their personal experiences about times they had money and had to plan how they would spend or save it. Ask them what they do when they want to make a big purchase and do not have enough money. Tell students that they will be using their budgeting skills to go shopping later in the lesson.
2. Ask students to define *estimation* in their own words. Allow them to share their responses. Ask them to discuss with partners the role of estimation in solving problems. Have them share their thoughts. Explain that estimation can yield a reasonable solution to a problem when an exact answer is not required. If an exact answer is required, estimation still provides a way to judge whether the calculated answer is reasonable. Give a variety of scenarios, and for each, ask students whether they would need to give an exact answer or an estimate (example scenario: the number of people attending a sporting event, such as a football game.)
3. Place students into small groups of two to four. Give each group a copy of the shopping list and copies of the shopping ads. Tell each group how much money they will have to do their shopping. Ask students to think about how they might use estimation when doing their shopping. Allow groups time to discuss this, and then have them share their thoughts.

4. Instruct students to “go shopping,” using the ads to purchase each item on the shopping list. Their purchases must meet their budget restrictions—i.e., they may not spend more than they have. Challenge students to find the best deals when shopping. Have students keep a list of their purchases and to record the value of their money as they go.
5. Bring the whole class back together, and have students share the purchasing decisions they made. Have them discuss how they made their choices and when they had the most difficulty in finalizing their choices. Have the class decide which group found the best deals while shopping. Ask students to discuss how decimals and estimation played a role in their shopping. Review situations in which decimals are needed in real life.
6. Distribute copies of the Practical Problems Involving Decimals handout, and have each student complete it. Have students solve other problems involving decimals that are used in real life. Make sure students record their estimates before solving.
7. Bring the whole class together to share responses and strategies used to solve these practical problems involving decimals. Discuss how estimation played a role in their problem solving. Revisit the chart showing real-life uses of decimals, and add any situations from the handout not mentioned earlier.

### **Assessment**

- **Questions**
  - Where do you commonly use decimals in real life?
  - Why are decimals important to us?
  - What role does estimation play in solving problems?
  - How did you solve that problem?
  - Can you solve that problem in a different way?
  - How do you know your answer is correct?
- **Journal/Writing Prompts**
  - Describe ways decimals are used in real life.
  - Explain why it is important to be able to solve problems involving decimals.
  - Describe the role estimation plays in solving problems.
  - Describe a real-life situation involving decimals.
- **Other**
  - Use the records from the shopping activity as a group assessment.
  - Use the Practical Problems Involving Decimals handout as an assessment.

### **Extensions and Connections (for all students)**

- Include discount coupons and calculation of tax in the shopping activity.
- Have students create a game board with squares that require purchase decisions. Their ability to purchase will depend on the budget they create. Have them determine what it takes to “win.”
- Have students create problems using the real-life situations listed on the chart paper.
- Have students interview their parents about how they use decimals in their lives.
- Have students interview their parents about how they construct their family budget.
- Invite the school cafeteria manager to come and talk to the class about how he/she plans for and purchases the appropriate amount of food for school breakfasts and lunches.

**Strategies for Differentiation**

- Provide students with calculators to use throughout the lesson.
- Provide students with coins and bills to use while shopping.

# Practical Problems Involving Decimals

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Joseph runs each morning before school. On Monday he ran 1.34 miles. On Tuesday he ran 2.456 miles. On Wednesday he ran 2.5 miles. On Thursday he ran 0.375 miles. On Friday he ran 0.25 miles. His goal for the week was to run 10 miles. Did Joseph meet his running goal for the week? How do the miles he ran compare to his goal? Explain your thinking.

Estimate:  
Show your thinking.

2. Sarah and three of her classmates entered a story they wrote into a contest at the mall. The team won the contest, and their prize was money. Each person on the team received \$21.25. How much money did the team win altogether? Explain your thinking.

Estimate:  
Show your thinking.

3. Bobby bought the following items at the school store: 10 pencils for \$0.21 each, 8 pens for \$0.45 each, and 2 posters for \$0.55 each. How much money did Bobby spend in all? Explain your thinking.

Estimate:  
Show your thinking.

4. Betsy made ribbons for school spirit day. Her roll of ribbon was 30 ft. long. For each individual ribbon she needed 0.625 ft. How many ribbons could she make from her roll? Explain your thinking.

Estimate:  
Show your thinking.